



NEWS RELEASE

United States Department Of Agriculture Rural Development
Rm. 152 Federal Building 100 Centennial Mall North Lincoln, Neb.
68508

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USDA Rural Development Provides Grants Promoting Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy

Beatrice, Neb. January 5, 2006-USDA Rural Development's Scot Blehm, state director for Nebraska, presented nine recipients with symbolic funding checks today. The checks, totaling over \$176,000, represent USDA's commitment to developing renewable energy systems and making energy-efficient improvements to assist producers and rural small businesses.

"The grants being recognized today will assist the recipients in making energy efficiency improvements or to develop renewable energy systems that will help ensure the profitability and sustainability of their business or farm operation," stated Blehm. "The dollars saved on energy and injected back into Nebraska's rural economy will help rural communities to thrive."

Check recipients include:

- Goertzen-Ensz Farms Partnership of Beatrice will utilize \$8,940 for conversion to a higher energy efficient irrigation system employing an energy conserving pumping system, electric motor, and low pressure pivot. Energy costs will be reduced by 80 percent, saving 697 million British thermal units (btus) annually. Cost of investment will be returned in 3.5 years.
- Grand Central Foods Inc. of York will use \$39,290 to assist in purchasing new energy efficient ice cream freezers, freezer display cases and ice merchandisers for their grocery store. Energy costs will be reduced by 50 percent, saving over 400,000 kilowatt hours (kwhs) yearly with the cost of investment returned in 6 years.
- Heavenly Treasures Inc. of Pawnee City received \$5,700 to install energy improvements to include new heating/cooling as well as new windows and lighting in their small, retail business. Over 167 million btus of energy will be saved yearly reducing energy consumption by 50 percent.
- Fred Koch of Beatrice plans to utilize \$15,630 to replace a gravity irrigation system with an efficient, low pressure pivot system and electric motor. Conversion will save 3,285 kwhs of energy, reducing consumption by over 30 percent.
- Mulhall Farm's Inc. of Gretna, producers of trees, shrubs and other nursery stock, received \$49,830 that will assist in the installation of a geo-thermal heating system for several new green houses being constructed by the farm operation. The heating system will generate 120,000 btus/hr per green house and will replace 95 percent of normal heating needs.

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- Gene Niederklein of Wilber received \$17,250 to assist in converting from an inefficient, gravity irrigation system to a highly efficient, low pressure pivot system and electric motor. Over 69 million btus of energy will be saved, reducing energy consumption by 54 percent.
- Larry Siebert of Henderson will utilize \$17,370 to convert from a gravity irrigation system and natural gas power units to energy efficient pivot systems and electric motors. Conversion will save 67 percent in energy consumption and over 500 million btus of actual energy.
- Sorensen Grading of Plattsmouth will utilize \$2,670 to make energy efficiency improvements to their business including lighting and heating system improvements, overhead shop door replacement, and installation of insulation. Fifty percent or 3,637 kwhs of energy will be saved equating to approximately \$587 a year.
- Wahoo Locker, LLC of Wahoo will use \$19,610 to replace existing locker equipment with more energy efficient systems. Nearly 249 million btus or 69 percent of energy consumption will be saved, equating to approximately \$3,500 a year in energy savings.

Statewide, \$418,348 in energy grants were awarded in Fiscal Year 2005 assisting in 36 energy efficiency improvement projects and 1 renewable energy. The 2002 Farm Bill made available monies for energy projects through the USDA Rural Development Energy Efficiency Improvements and Renewable Energy Systems program. Since the beginning of the program, Nebraska has received nearly \$778,000 for 57 energy projects.

Energy grants are awarded to farmers, ranchers, and for-profit small rural businesses for renewable energy systems such as wind, solar, biomass, biogas, or geothermal sources or hydrogen derived from biomass or water using wind, solar, or geothermal energy sources; and for energy efficiency improvement projects such as improvements to HVAC systems, insulation, refrigeration, lighting, pumping systems, air systems, motor systems, irrigation systems, etc.

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